

60130-1308
99MRA0087/0246**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Claims 8-11, 16, 16, 27 and 28 stand rejected and claims 1-7, 12-14, and 18-26 are objected to. Applicant has amended claims 1, 7, 9-11, 12, 17, and 19-21. Claims 5, 8, 14-16, and 22 are cancelled. Claims 29-35 have been added.

Formal issues

The Office Action objected to the drawings because of various informalities. Applicant submits herewith new drawings that include reference numeral "30a" in Figure 4 and to include reference numeral "28" in Figure 1 to indicate the general location of the gear teeth in the mechanism.

The Office Action objected to the specification because the Abstract was not in the proper language and format. Applicant has included a substitute Abstract to place the Abstract in proper form. Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings and the specification is respectfully requested.

Claim objections

The Office Action objected to the claims because of various informalities. Applicant has corrected the informalities helpfully noted by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the objection is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 8, 15, 16 and 27 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant has rewritten independent claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 8 and intervening claim 5. Applicant has added new claims 29 and 30 to rewrite allowable claims 15 and 16, respectively, in independent form. Applicant respectfully notes that Examiner's comments on the reasons for allowable subject matter should not be imputed to Applicant.

§ 102 rejections

Claims 1-7 and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,664,430 to Bernard ("Bernard"). Applicant has amended independent claim 1

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to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 8, rendering the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,978,153 to Hirsch ("Hirsch"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 8, rendering the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,934,717 to Wirths et al. ("Wirths"). Applicant has cancelled claim 22 without prejudice, rendering the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 22-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,000,257 to Thomas ("Thomas"). Applicant has cancelled claim 22 without prejudice, rendering the rejection moot with respect to claim 22. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection with respect to claims 23-26.

The Office Action asserted that Thomas includes at least one abutment 70 and 72 for engagement with a release means 32 like the claimed invention (p. 7). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Reference numerals 70 and 72 in Thomas respectively refer to first and second cams that operate completely independently of each other. More particularly, the first cam 70 can be driven to contact a claw pawl 26 out of engagement with a claw to release the latch (Figure 3; col. 3, lines 18-23). As can be seen in the Figure, however, the second cam 72 is not serving any function. Instead, the second cam 72 is used to superlock the latch by deactivating the release lever 32 (Figure 6; col. 4, lines 43-55), leaving the first cam 70 at this point without any function. In short, the first and second cams 70, 72 conduct different, independent functions without the operation of one cam causing the other cam to carry out another function at the same time (col. 3, lines 15-27).

Independent claim 23, by contrast, recites that the plurality of abutments that are operatively coupled to each other so that engagement of a release mechanism by one of the abutments causes one of the other abutments to provide a drive train stop. In other words, the abutments work in unison with each other due to their operative coupling. Because Thomas shows cams that operate independently of each other rather than operatively coupled together,

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Thomas does not anticipate claims 23-26. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

§ 103 rejections

Claims 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernard in view of Thomas. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Applicant has amended claims 17-21 to depend on allowable new claim 29. Applicant has also added new claims 31-35 to depend on allowable new claim 30. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna M. Shih, Reg. No. 36,372
Carlson, Gaskey & Olds
400 W. Maple Road, Ste. 350
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 988-8360

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, (703) 872-9306, on March 24, 2004.


Beth A Beard